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01/14/2008 09:37 AM

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cc

bcc

Subject: Fw: Commentary after the Special Community Advisory
Group meeting

fyi

----- Forwarded by Paul Peronard/EPR/R8/USEPA/US on 01/14/2008 09:37 AM -----



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01/12/2008 03:09 PM

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Subject: Commentary after the Special Community Advisory Group
meeting

The Voice of Libby, Troy, and all
Lincoln County, Montana



Commentary after the Special Community Advisory Group meeting

Lets get tough together!

Saturday, January 12, 2008

To CAG Members and the Community,

The Community Meeting on Thursday night was somewhat sobering for me. I moved to Libby during the summer to be in a place where I could photograph my 2nd love - Nature. Only to find a community devastated and divided by a problem that is unimaginably huge and deadly. I decided to get involved, because I feel I have skills and experience that could be useful and because I wanted to give something to the community that has so warmly welcomed Anna and I.

However, this has changed; Thursday night I realized that Nature is not my only love. I've come to love Libby, but more than that, the people!

After Thursday, I now more than ever, want to be a part of the solution to this problem, however I still struggle with, what that solution is. I realized that every community member, every CAG member, and even Paul, were correct in what they were saying. The one thing I heard in common is that we need to be done with this; we need the money and resources to finely say that our community and families are safe.

I feel the only way we can accomplish this is to **start getting tough on the bureaucrats!** This is something I have felt and advocated for all along. But today I feel more strongly about this than ever.

In September, at CAG, we discussed budget priorities. In that discussion we concluded that roughly \$38,000,000 would be needed to accomplish what was listed on the FY '08 "Project Priority Matrix." If you reflect on the Sept '07 CAG Meeting Summary, Paul Peronard, the EPA Libby Team Leader, was asked, "How much money can you spend *effectively* next year on cleanup and investigation projects?" His response included: "Based on the matrix costs and other work we are doing on investigations, I estimate roughly that we could use about \$29 million for cleanup projects and another \$9 million *plus* for investigations." This equals \$38,000,000 *plus* .

After the Thursday night Community Meeting, KPAX interviewed Paul, he somewhat reaffirmed that he will do the work if he has the money by stating, "We will do more and add more if we get more resources."

However, Mr. Murry, the EPA Regional Program Director sang, a different tune in his post meeting KPAX interview by stating, "We feel like we have an adequate budget this year, we've increased our budget over the last two years. It's hard to continue the quality of work if you increase the quantity of work beyond what you can effectively manage. We may be getting to the point where we've reached that threshold." This would seem to be a complete contradiction to what Paul Peronard has stated.

I strongly feel that if we (CAG) continue our present course, nothing will change. The small amounts of money we get from other sources for medical care, is a drop in the bucket. It's like putting a bandaid used far shaving scratch on the incision after open-heart surgery.

I would like to propose as a future CAG Agenda Item. That we seriously discuss a Comprehensive Lobbying Plan, if this is beyond what CAG wants to focus on in the monthly meeting, we should consider forming a legislative or lobbying committee. There are several basic things we should do to start out (In my Opinion.)

- 1.) Identify what our bargaining powers and/or leveraging tools are.
- 2.) Make sure the community has easy access to contact information for the

decision makers.

- 3.) Draft letters that the community can pickup and sign, and/or cut and paste from a website, then mail, fax, or email themselves, as effortlessly as possible.
- 4.) Get lobbying information to the community. We should teach the community the possible benefits of lobbying, how to effectively lobby, and what resources we (CAG) are providing to help them lobby.

If we see some progress in this, we might expand a little.

- 1.) Personal meetings with legislators and other decision makers.
- 2.) Giving unsolicited testimony in front of the Legislative Committees in Washington.

I ask CAG and the community, only to explore these options, and encourage open discussion. DC Orr and others have said, "We need to start getting tough." There couldn't be anything I agree with more!

Lets get tough together!

Sincerely,
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